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Jack Guinn Says:

Spies Need a Union And Fringe Benefits

ANYWAY you look at it, the spy game has lost a lot of its romantic appeal. It's bad enough to get caught, but now comes a fellow named Robert Berlin of Chicago and says the Central Intelligence Agency wanted him to work for nothing.

According to the Associated Press, Mr. Berlin says he was planning an innocent 10-day trip to Russia when he was approached by an agent of the CIA and asked to make "certain mental observations" of what was going on in the Soviet Union. That's all. No camera the size of a cigaret lighter to make photographs of the secret fortifications; no special code for valuable notes; no poison needle; no money.

Mr. Berlin says he didn't think it was right for a tourist to be going around making certain mental observations, so he went to a newspaper, the Chicago American, and told on the CIA.



Guinn

So there you have a situation worth the attention of the philosophers who ponder the psychology of modern chrome-plated America. It is sad that 28-year-old Mr. Berlin couldn't have had enough adventure in his soul to enter into the spirit of the thing, even for free. There wasn't much risk. Anybody with a poker face and a stiff upper lip can get by the police and the customs people without disclosing the hiding place of his certain mental observations.

But what's far worse is facing up to the news that this is the way we get our information.

Pleasant Work

Now that the two National Security Agency code experts have disappeared and are presumed by Washington to have gone over to the Communists, a tourist in Moscow could have himself a time if it weren't for the fact the CIA is so stingy with its funds.

Imagine wandering from saloon to saloon on a CIA expense account, ordering a round for the house and hollering out in comradely fashion: "Any of you fellows seen old Bernon Mitchell or William Martin?"

Tasty Treat

A few years ago I was a spy myself, at least by Communist definition, and it was enjoyable although not particularly remunerative employment. Actually all I did was work for a wire service and scratch around for something interesting to write about. What annoyed the Communists was that they were doing all the interesting things.

But even such run of the mill spy work as this has its rewarding moments, such as the time the Hungarian Secret Police, all Communists, misplaced three of their finest agents.

These fellows had been assigned to track down a group of smugglers who were believed to be operating out of a cave near the Austrian border, evading the high export tax by sneaking into the hungry Vienna market such delicacies as apricot and cherry brandies, canned ham and very tasty Hungarian sausage.

In any secret organization, as the American intelligence people keep learning all the time, there is always some fun-loving or resentful soul who likes to sit around with the enemy, sampling the refreshments and smoking up the cigars, and I had such an old buddy in the Secret Police. One day he said they had lost the fellows watching the smugglers and that a big investigation was under way.

This went on for days and my friend kept reading the official reports, making certain mental observations and a few humorous handwritten notes which he passed on from time to time. Finally the investigation ended and the mystery was solved, but it had many complications and the Communists had gotten to the point where they wished they had never heard of it.

For one thing, a very high-placed Communist official was getting rich off the smuggling operations.

Probably less important, but so entertaining that the Communists went into a rage of denial after publication of the report horrified all of Austria, was the fact that the three missing policemen had been incorporated into the tasty Hungarian sausage.